There is no proposal to ban sale of fast food and cold drinks in canteens of educational institutions. It is always the endeavour of the Government to promote healthy life styles which also includes proper food nutrition.

Amendments to the drugs and cosmetics act

2516. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Drugs and Cosmetics Act is ineffective to deal with the various crimes relating to manufacture and sale of spurious drugs;

(b) if so, whether the NCT Government of Delhi has urged Government to bring suitable amendments in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to check such crimes; and

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) No, Sir. Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, severe penalties have been prescribed for manufacture and sale of spurious drugs and the offences are punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 5 years but which may extend to a term of life and with fine which shall not be less than Rs. 10,000/-.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Government of India has set up an expert committee on January 27, 2003 under the Chairmanship of Dr. R.A. Mashalkar, DG, CSIR and Secretary to Government of India to undertake a comprehensive review of the drugs regulatory system in the country including evaluation of the extent of spurious and sub-standard drugs, to effectively tackle the problem of spurious drugs and to recommend measures to be taken in this regard.

Asthma patients in Mumbai

2517. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of Asthma patients is increasing in Mumbai city;

(b) if so, the reasons for spread of the disease; and

(c) whether Government have chalked out any plan to check this menace?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) According to ICMR epidemiological studies in different cities including Mumbai, approximately 5 to 10% of the population in all age groups is suffering from asthma.

(b) The reasons for increased prevalence of asthma in cities including Mumbai are high density of vehicular traffic leading to increased oxidant air pollution, higher level of indoor air pollution, exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, increase dietary salt intake, reduced antioxidants in diet, etc.

(c) The steps to control asthma include early identification and effective treatment appropriate for the severity of the disease. Facilities for diagnosis and treatment of asthma are available all over the country.

China's share in world herbal medicine market

2518. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has secured a share of $ 16 billion in world herbal medicine market;

(b) the incentives Government are providing to promote Indian Systems of Medicine;

(c) whether the Ayurvedic formulation units have asked for exemption from VAT and also from import duty on equipments for analytical purposes; and

(d) whether the newly formed National Medicinal Plants Board can function as a nodal agency for overseeing proper utilization of incentives by the indigenous medicine manufacturing units?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) This information is not available with the Government.